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FOREIGN LANGUAGE ARTICULATION IN CALIFORNIA SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES.

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CALIFORNIA STATE DEPT. OF EDUCATION, SACRAMENTO

REPORT NUMBER CSDE-72351-300

PUB DATE JUN 66

EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.09 HC-\$0.64 16F.

DESCRIPTORS- \*ARTICULATION (PROGRAM), \*CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT, \*LANGUAGE PROGRAMS, \*LANGUAGE LEARNING LEVELS, \*MODERN LANGUAGES, COLLEGE PLACEMENT, SACRAMENTO

THE PROGRESS MADE IN TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGE SKILLS SHOWS UP THE MAJOR PROBLEM OF ARTICULATION AMONG ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS, JUNIOR AND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS, AND COLLEGES, AND IT IS THIS PROBLEM THAT IS EXPLORED BY THE CALIFORNIA LIAISON COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN LANGUAGES. THE ADOPTION OF COMMON OBJECTIVES AND PROVISION FOR CONTINUITY OF LANGUAGE STUDY IN PUBLIC EDUCATION FROM THE FIRST LEVEL THROUGH TEACHER TRAINING CAN CONTRIBUTE TO THE SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE. A STUDENT'S PLACEMENT AT ANY POINT IN THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE SEQUENCE SHOULD DEPEND ON THE DEGREE OF LINGUISTIC PROFICIENCY ATTAINED IN PREVIOUS LEVELS. AT THE COLLEGE LEVEL, THIS CAN BE DETERMINED BEST BY PROFESSIONALLY DESIGNED TESTS. UNFORTUNATELY, THE CREDIT-HOUR STRUCTURE OF MOST COLLEGES MAY LEAD TO REPETITION OF WORK, THOUGH THE COMMITTEE DISCOURAGES CREDIT FOR DUPLICATION OF STUDY. JUNIOR COLLEGES MUST RECONSIDER AND ENLARGE THEIR CURRICULUMS, AND COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES MUST DIRECT SPECIAL ATTENTION TO THE TRAINING OF PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS IN LANGUAGE, LITERATURE, PSYCHOLOGY, AND METHODS. THE COMMITTEE FURTHER RECOMMENDS THAT CALIFORNIA SCHOOLS EXPAND THEIR MULTILANGUAGE OFFERINGS AT ALL LEVELS AND THAT A CENTRAL INFORMATION CENTER PROVIDE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION ABOUT PROGRAMS AND POLICIES IN THE LANGUAGE FIELD. APPENDIXES INCLUDE DETAILED DESCRIPTIONS OF FOUR LEVELS OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE COMPETENCE AND LISTS OF CURRENT AND FORMER MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE. (GJ)

# **Foreign Language Articulation in California Schools and Colleges**

**Policy Recommendations  
of the  
Liaison Committee on Foreign Language**

**U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION AND WELFARE  
Office of Education**

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**CALIFORNIA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
Max Rafferty, Superintendent of Public Instruction  
Sacramento 1966**

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*The Liaison Committee on Foreign Language is a statewide committee representing all segments of public education in California, from elementary school through graduate school. The Committee was established in 1963 by the Articulation Conference.*

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**Secretary:** Joseph Axelrod, Dean, School of Humanities and Fine Arts, California State College at Palos Verdes

## FOREWORD

Within the last 20 years, members of the teaching profession have developed new techniques and new machinery to make the learning of a second language more effective. Progress, however, is not entirely a blessing; it shows up a major problem: articulation. This became apparent with the introduction of foreign language study in the elementary schools of California and the intensification of the study of foreign languages, particularly non-Western languages and cultures, in high schools and colleges.

Basic to the solution of the problem is the adoption of a common overall plan for foreign language training. One such plan is suggested by the State Department of Education's publication, *Language Instruction: Perspective and Prospectus*. The recommendations made in it are part of the process by which the state of California is creatively solving the problem of articulation.

It is a pleasure to see that common goals are being sought by such various statewide groups as the Liaison Committee on Foreign Language, which represents all segments of public education in California from kindergarten to graduate school; the Foreign Language Association of Northern California; the Modern Language Association of Southern California; and the State Department of Education. It is to be hoped that through increasing our efforts, the articulation problem in foreign language instruction will be solved in the foreseeable future.



*Superintendent of Public Instruction*

## **PREFACE**

In the spring of 1963, the Articulation Conference brought into existence the Liaison Committee on Foreign Language, charging it with the responsibility of recommending solutions to a number of articulation problems in foreign language. The Committee consisted of 24 persons, six each from the University of California, the state colleges, the junior colleges, and the high schools. Later, elementary school representatives were asked to join the Committee; they were appointed at the autumn, 1965, meeting.

For those individuals who are not familiar with the Articulation Conference, it can be described as a voluntary agency composed of four segments of California public education—the high schools, the junior colleges, the state colleges, and the university. This agency, which came into being over 45 years ago, has been meeting at least once annually for the general exploration of problems of common interest as well as for the adoption of resolutions and recommendations on specific issues of articulation. To explore particular problems of articulation, the Articulation Conference set up the statewide Liaison Committee on Foreign Language.

The Committee began its work by analyzing the various aspects of the total articulation problem in foreign language instruction in California; once these aspects were formulated, subcommittees were set up to work on them. After working two years, six subcommittees submitted their reports, together with recommendations, to the full Committee. These were then discussed and revised.

The report presented here summarizes the various subcommittees' recommendations after they were revised by the full Committee discussions. The

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report was submitted to the Administrative Committee of the Articulation Conference on December 2, 1965. The chairman of the Liaison Committee, in submitting the report, requested permission to publish and disseminate it. The Administrative Committee voiced the opinion that it would be profitable to disseminate this report and to invite reactions and responses from educators.

The Committee extends its thanks to Max Rafferty and his staff, particularly Frank Largent, Chief of the Bureau of National Defense Education Act Administration.

The Committee wishes also to thank Joseph Axelrod, its 1964-65 chairman, and Roger C. Anton, its 1965-66 chairman, for preparing the several drafts of this report.

THE LIAISON COMMITTEE ON  
FOREIGN LANGUAGE



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## **A New Era in the Teaching and Learning of Foreign Languages**

In the mid-1950s, a new era began in the teaching and learning of modern foreign languages in this country. Among the basic changes was the change in public attitudes toward the importance of language study. In addition, new methods of teaching were being explored, language study on the secondary school level was expanding rapidly, and there was a strong movement toward language study in the elementary schools. Finally, with the growing emphasis on non-Western studies, language study programs were expanding everywhere to include more than the commonly taught languages spoken in Western Europe and in Latin America.

These changes pointed up articulation problems in the foreign language field. The problems themselves were not new. However, because both enrollments and programs had increased, such problems became acute. Changes were occurring everywhere, but sometimes more slowly in one place than in another and in different directions at different places.

The result was inevitable: articulation points became sore points. Elementary pupils who had had some instruction in language moved to the secondary level to find, very often, that their language study was ignored. As more and more high school students progressed to college, innumerable placement problems arose in language programs because some students had been taught by traditional methods and others by more modern methods. Junior colleges began to find their students ready to move beyond the fourth-semester course after they had completed only one or two semesters.



In the early 1960s, a serious curriculum gap was evident in the preparation of language teachers. The teacher-training programs of the late 1950s had lagged behind the times. The students who completed language programs for a bachelor's degree were well trained in many ways, but very often they were not proficient enough in the spoken language to meet the new demands being made on language teachers. In the late 1950s, only the teachers completing the exceptional teacher-training programs could qualify as "excellent," according to criteria then being developed by the Modern Language Association of America (MLA). By now, many more are able to attain "excellent" ratings on all seven parts of the new tests devised at MLA headquarters: listening comprehension, speaking, reading, writing, culture, linguistics, and methodology. However, the profession still faces an enormous problem in its continuing attempt to improve language teacher preparation.

### **Fundamental Factors in Solving Articulation Problems**

In the view of the Liaison Committee on Foreign Language, the normal problems of articulation in the schools and colleges of California *can* be solved in the foreseeable future.

The ultimate solutions to articulation problems depend on two fundamental factors: First of all, California schools and colleges must adopt common objectives in the teaching and learning of foreign languages; and second, there must be acceptance of a curricular continuum which would serve as the basic guideline for language instruction from the earliest level of study through the teacher-training program.

The first of these tasks—adoption of common objectives—has already been considerably facilitated. Acceptable objectives for the first four levels of language instruction have been formulated in *Language Instruction: Perspective and Prospectus*, a California State Department of Education publication. (See Appendix A.)

The principles of audiolingual instruction for teaching listening comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing are approved by professional organizations such as the Modern Language Association of America, the Department of Foreign Language of the National Education Association, the California State Department of Education, the California Council of Foreign Language Teachers Associations, the Modern Language Association of Southern California, and the Foreign Language Association of Northern California. The Liaison Committee on Foreign Language endorses the policy announcements made by these organizations.

### **Levels of Competence: Key Concept in Curriculum Building and Placement of Students**

Within the framework that the Liaison Committee on Foreign Language finds most fruitful for discussions regarding articulation problems, "level" refers to *level of linguistic proficiency*, not to the amount of time that a student has devoted to language study. Attempts to equate given levels of proficiency with given numbers of semesters or quarters of study remain purely artificial. The major criterion to be used in determining where a student is to be placed, as he moves from one institution to another and as he continues his study in a given language, is the level of competence he has attained

in listening comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing.

From this general principle, it follows that scores on proficiency tests should constitute the means for placing students in foreign language courses in California colleges and universities. For modern languages, it is obvious that the tests should measure all four skills. Further, the Committee recommends the use of professionally designed tests for which national norms have been established instead of locally constructed instruments.

The case is clear: The object of a placement program is to place an entering student at the level for which he is linguistically prepared, whatever his training has been. Scores on placement tests should therefore be used to determine the level at which the student will be placed. Other criteria should not be used except in borderline cases. Moreover, in order to establish local norms, these professionally designed instruments should be used to test continuing students as well as entering students.

The Liaison Committee recognizes that when large groups of students are to be tested, difficulties exist in the administration of speaking and listening-comprehension tests and in the scoring of the speaking test. More efficient and economical methods of administering and scoring these tests for large groups must be found, and the Committee urges immediate support for such an investigation. At the same time, however, it does not feel that the magnitude of the problem justifies limiting the scope of placement tests to exercises in reading and writing or in translation. This practice is now followed in a number of language departments on California campuses.

The Committee urges that high school students be advised to continue in college the language they

studied in elementary and high schools. A college preparatory student should have *at least* four years of study in a single language as he approaches graduation from high school. Again, a statement in terms of time is not as significant as a statement about competence in the language. Different school systems may wish to implement the principle in different ways, but the principle here is indisputable: The sequence of study in a single language should be long enough to enable the student to reach a level of usable proficiency—that is, the proficiency described in Level III, as quoted in Appendix A.

### **The Credit-Hour Structure In Colleges: A Primary Source of Articulation Problems in the Language Field**

Although a few institutions of higher education in California no longer award undergraduate degrees merely on the basis of accumulated credit hours, the Committee recognizes that the credit-hour system is still prevalent in California higher education. The practice of setting a language requirement for a degree in terms of credit hours—or of setting a requirement for entrance to college in terms of high school semesters of study—will probably remain fairly common as long as the accumulation of credit hours remains the primary mode of earning a degree. This is the source of many of the problems of language articulation between high school and college. For example, if a placement test score indicates that an entering college student must “repeat” study for which his high school transcript shows he has already received “credit,” then the problem immediately arises on most campuses as to whether such study should be permitted to count to-

ward the credit hours the student accumulates to qualify for a bachelor's degree.

The Committee believes the solution to such problems must be determined by the individual institution. However, it recommends as a general principle that no college credit be granted for "duplication" of work for which the student holds high school credit. At the same time, it recommends also that each college and university should use its system of rewards—whether through credit hours or in other ways—to give recognition to those entering freshmen who have satisfactorily met and surpassed the goals described in *Language Instruction: Perspective and Prospectus*. (See Appendix A.)

### **Junior College Language Offerings Beyond the Fourth-Semester Course**

Since students are now completing high school programs with more advanced training in foreign languages than they have had in the past, California junior colleges today are presented with a special problem: What sorts of language courses should they offer to students who have already had the equivalent of four college semesters in a foreign language?

The Liaison Committee on Foreign Language recommends that junior colleges expand their foreign language offerings beyond the customary second-year college course. It would be best, of course, if these offerings were not patterned after upper division college or university courses. Additional work on the lower division level can be offered in more advanced courses in conversation and composition, in a course on civilization and culture, in introduction to literature courses, in readings of lit-



erary works or scientific papers, in introductory linguistics, and in similar aspects of language work. Such courses should be taught in the foreign language. They should be fully transferable.

### **College and University Programs for Foreign Language Teaching Majors**

The most critical problems of articulation center ultimately in the training which prospective foreign language teachers receive in California's colleges and universities. The Committee wishes to present here its recommendations on programs for foreign language teaching credential majors. Such other aspects of the teacher-training problem as inservice training for elementary and high school teachers who are now or are soon to be involved in teaching a language are still under study by the Committee.

First of all, foreign language teaching majors must learn to understand, speak, read, and write the language they will be teaching. While there are other skills, abilities, and kinds of knowledge which the language teacher ought to have, competence in the four skills must be of central concern to the teacher-training institution, the certifying agency, and the employing district.

The Liaison Committee, therefore, supports the pronouncements of the professional organizations in the language field which urge that maximal use of the foreign language be made in all college courses—whether courses in language, in culture, in literary study, or in linguistics.

The Committee wishes to emphasize, however, that while proficiency in listening comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing is absolutely essential, it is clearly only one of several major goals of a foreign language teacher-preparation program.



The prospective teacher must also acquire the knowledge in several major disciplines which is appropriate to the tasks he will be facing in the classroom—knowledge relating to educational psychology, to the study of culture in general and of literature in particular, and to linguistic science. Moreover, he must have training in methodology to help him, as he begins to work in the classroom, to acquire the *art* of teaching.

Degree programs in foreign language studies at the state colleges, at the University of California, and at the private teacher-preparation institutions in California often have, understandably, purposes other than the preparation of language teachers. As a consequence, a prospective language teacher who completes his work for a degree may be well versed in one of the several relevant disciplines but may nevertheless not be prepared for the demands of a teaching post.

The Liaison Committee on Foreign Language, therefore, joins the Modern Language Association and other professional organizations in the field of language study in suggesting that no graduate of a teacher-training program—whatever the level of his formal course work—be certified for language teaching unless he can demonstrate that he has reached respectable levels of skill and knowledge in listening comprehension, speaking, reading, writing, culture, linguistics, and the art and science of teaching, as measured by such instruments as the MLA tests for advanced students and teachers. The most recent MLA statement regarding foreign language teacher preparation programs appears in *The Education of the Modern Foreign Language Teacher for American Schools* by Joseph Axelrod (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1966).

## **The Problem of Imbalance In Language Offerings**

While the Liaison Committee understands the circumstances which explain the imbalance that has developed in foreign language offerings in California schools, it wishes to recommend the following as a *basic goal* toward which all schools should work: a minimum of two modern foreign languages at the elementary level, and a minimum of three modern foreign languages and one classical language at the high school level.

Along with this recommendation, the Committee wishes to caution against instituting foreign language programs without planning for continuity in the languages selected—a continuity which should begin before grade six and run through the final year of the high school.

The Liaison Committee recognizes that the particular languages taught in a given school district are chosen at the discretion of the district. But it urges that cognizance be given not only to the linguistic background of students and to the historical interests of local communities but also to the broader purposes of general education. To satisfy these purposes, multilanguage programs at all levels of study—going beyond the Western languages whenever possible—are a necessity.

The Committee does not stand alone in these recommendations. The California State Board of Education passed a resolution to this effect on April 9, 1964, and both the Foreign Language Association of Northern California and the Modern Language Association of Southern California have urged continuity of multilanguage programs from the elementary grades through grade twelve.

### **Effective Communication Among Schools and Colleges About Language Programs and Policies**

Ineffective communication among the schools and colleges about their current programs and policies constitutes a most serious block in the articulation process. The Committee, therefore, proposes that a central information center be set up which would use modern automated methods for collecting, processing, and disseminating information to schools and colleges about programs and policies in the language field. The Committee recommends that the State Department of Education be requested to set up and operate such an information center.

## APPENDIX A

### Description of Competence by Levels<sup>1</sup>

Since competent teachers for second language programs are still in very short supply, we can hardly expect many full-length programs of the proper sort, running from an early grade through grade twelve, to be functioning in the near future. Therefore, we must plan in part in terms of temporary expedients that though they fall short of the ideal are nevertheless improvements on the traditional situation. We shall speak here of different streams and of certain roughly comparable levels of achievement. The quantity of work ascribed to a single level is defined in terms of the amount of learning that can be reasonably expected in a high school class that meets regularly five full periods a week for one school year and operates efficiently. . . .

In any single school system, the materials and procedures for levels III through VI can be identical for all these streams, and students from all streams can even be commingled in a single class, since at the high school level there seems to be no serious difficulty in having students from different grades work together if their preparation is comparable. Levels I and II are another matter. Although the language to be learned is the same regardless of stream, the interests and capacities of eight-year-olds and of twelve-year-olds are different, and materials and procedures must be adjusted accordingly. The attention span of the eight-year-old is

<sup>1</sup> *Language Instruction: Perspective and Prospectus*. Prepared by Nelson Brooks, Charles F. Hockett, and Everett V. O'Rourke. Bulletin of the California State Department of Education, Vol. XXXII, No. 4, November, 1963. Sacramento: California State Department of Education, 1963, pp. 22-26.

comparatively short. A single period of 20 minutes of concentrated purposeful practice once a day, five days a week, throughout grades three to six is ample. About 40 minutes at a time, once a day, five days a week, throughout grades seven and eight are enough for children in the basic stream to master Level II and for children in alternative stream B to master Level I.

BASIC STREAM			ALTERNATIVE STREAM			
Stream A			Stream B		Stream C	
Grades	3					
	4	I *				
	5					
	6					
	7	II	7	I		
	8		8			
	9	III	9	II	9	I
	10	IV	10	III	10	II
	11	V	11	IV	11	III
	12	VI	12	V	12	IV

\* Roman numerals indicate levels.

These recommendations on time and timing are approximate, not restrictive. . . .

#### LEVEL I

Demonstrate, in hearing and in speaking, control of the whole sound system.

Repeat the account of a brief incident as he hears it read, phrase by phrase.

Retell aloud such an incident after repeating it in this way.

Participate, with a fluent speaker, in a dialogue about any one of perhaps 20 situations.

Read aloud a familiar text.

Write a familiar text from dictation.

Rewrite a simple narrative containing familiar material, making simple changes in tense.

Do orally and in writing exercises that involve a limited manipulation of number, gender, word



order, tense, replacement, negation, interrogation, command, comparison, and possession.

#### **LEVEL II**

Demonstrate continued accurate control of the sound system.

Recognize all of the basic syntactic patterns of speech and use most of them.

Comprehend, by listening and also by reading, subject matter that is comparable in content and difficulty to what he has learned.

Be able to write all that he can say.

Have firsthand knowledge of brief samples of cultural and of contemporary literary prose and be able to converse in simple terms about them.

#### **LEVEL III**

Demonstrate continued accurate control of the sound system.

Demonstrate accurate control, in hearing and in speaking, of all the basic syntactic patterns of speech.

Read aloud a text comparable in content and style to one he has studied.

Demonstrate the ability to understand what is heard in listening to a variety of texts prepared for comprehension by ear.

Write from dictation a text he has previously examined for the details of its written forms.

Demonstrate adequate comprehension and control of all but low-frequency patterns of syntax and unusual vocabulary encountered in printed texts. (Grammatical analysis and explanations of structure, when accomplished in the language, are proper to this level and to the following levels.)

Have first-hand knowledge of 100 to 200 pages of readings of a cultural and literary nature; be able to discuss their contents orally and to



write acceptable sentences and paragraphs about their contents.

#### **LEVEL IV**

Read aloud an unfamiliar printed text.

Write from dictation—(a) following a preliminary reading and (b) without a preliminary reading—passages of literary prose.

Converse with a fluent speaker on a topic such as a play seen, a novel read, a trip taken, or a residence lived in.

Read a text; then in writing (a) summarize its contents and (b) comment on the ideas expressed.

In a page or two of text, carefully selected for the purpose, discover and comment upon a stated number of points that are culturally significant. These may be in linguistic structure, in idiom, or in vocabulary reference, e.g., if English were the language being learned, a text about the United States in which the term "night school" appears.

Receive oral instructions about an assignment to be written: its nature, its contents, to whom addressed, its form, its length, and its style of presentation, and then write the assignment.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Members of the Liaison Committee on Foreign Language 1965-66**

#### **UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA REPRESENTATIVES**

Thomas L. Broadbent, Chairman, Department of  
German and Russian, Riverside  
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Spanish, Davis  
John E. Englekirk, Professor of Spanish and Portu-  
guese, Los Angeles  
Edmond E. Masson, Associate Professor, French  
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Professor of German and Director of Relations  
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Sonoma State College  
Gustave Mathieu, Professor, Foreign Languages,  
California State College at Fullerton  
Carlos Rojas, Professor of Foreign Languages and  
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**George V. Hall, Associate Superintendent, San Diego City Unified School District**

**G. Gilbert Rogers, Secondary Curriculum Consultant, San Luis Obispo County**

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**Donald Boyer, Regional Director, Elementary Division, San Diego City Unified School District**

**Julia Gonsalves, Consultant, Foreign Languages, State Department of Education**

## APPENDIX C

### Former Members of the Liaison Committee on Foreign Language (with dates of service<sup>1</sup>)

Arthur L. Askins, Assistant Professor of Spanish and Portuguese, University of California, Berkeley (1964-65)

George Dietterle, Director of Instruction, Monterey Public Schools (1963-65)

Carlo L. Golino, Professor of Italian and Dean, Division of Humanities, University of California, Los Angeles (1963-64)

Wulf Griessbach, Foreign Language Department, Los Angeles State College (1963-65)

Kai-yu Hsu, Head, Department of Foreign Language, San Francisco State College (1963-65)

Claude L. Hulet, Associate Professor of Spanish, University of California, Los Angeles (1964-65)

Martin Kanes, Associate Professor of French, University of California, Davis (1964-65)

Marion L. Nielsen, Chairman, Division of Humanities, Sonoma State College (1963-64)

Arthur North, Assistant Superintendent of Education Service, Azusa Unified School District (1963-64)

Samuel Oelrich, Principal, Fairfax High School, Los Angeles (1963-64)

Everett V. O'Rourke, Consultant, Bureau of Secondary Education, State Department of Education (1963-65)

<sup>1</sup>The positions listed for the members of the Liaison Committee were those held by the individuals for the years indicated but do not necessarily represent current positions.

**John H. R. Polt, Assistant Professor of Spanish and Portuguese, University of California, Berkeley (1963-64)**

**Siegfried B. Puknat, Chairman, German Department, University of California, Davis (1963-65)**

**Irving Putter, Professor of French, University of California, Berkeley (1963-64)**

**William A. Reynolds, Departments of English and French, Fresno City College (1963-65)**

**O. Paul Straubinger, Professor of German, and Vice-Chairman, Division of Humanities, University of California, Riverside (1963-65)**

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